

GENERAL SYNOD 2017

Representative Church Body Report Seconded: The Rt Revd Kenneth Kearon

**Embargoed Against Delivery
Check Against Delivery**

In seconding this report, I'm very conscious in following Mr Saville I would be following someone with a complete mastery of the complex figures and charts which take up most of the RB Report, so I thought I would approach the report from my own perspective, and the experience of this diocese where Synod is meeting this year.

First is the way in which we enable and educate our clergy and lay leadership. As is clear from the report a very significant portion of our annual budget is spent on the selection and training of our ordinands, much of it through our Theological Institute. Some of you may know that I taught there for over twenty years and saw many changes during that time. In my more recent position as Secretary General of the Anglican Communion I visited theological colleges and seminaries around the Anglican Communion. From that wider experience I'd like to make a few points:

1. Theological education including the formation of clergy and equipping lay people is always expensive, but most Churches find it worthwhile. Unless we have lay and ordained leadership capable of articulating their faith and engaging that faith in the world of today, then we will not have much of a future.
2. There are many ways of delivering education today and many third-level institutions now use a mix of methodologies. None of them, however, can replace the need for a dedicated institution and teaching staff. That's true not just of the Church but of all professions and the way in which professional education is delivered. Some provinces of the Anglican Communion have closed or severely reduced the structural institution-based form of education for clergy and lay people, but some now regret that decision and are seeking to row back on that. We must be careful in any discussion of the future of the Institute that we take very seriously the experience of other Churches.

3. I want to commend the current principal of the institution, Canon Elliott and his staff, for the high standard of clergy and lay people being educated in the various programmes of the institute. The range of courses available must be difficult to manage and sustain, and I commend him and his staff for what they do on our behalf for the good of the Church.

A second area I wish to comment on is the Parish Resources website. As I chair diocesan council meetings and finance and property meetings, I can both recognise the thinking and good sense behind the very many regulations that come at us from all sides, but also the increasing pressure that anyone involved in diocesan or parish administration is feeling, and there's no indication that that is relenting.

So the Parish Resources section of our new Church website is a very welcome support for all of us. It is well designed and accessible, and certainly addresses very many of the needs and requirements of our hard-pressed parish and diocesan volunteers. We're now used to this level of service on-line when we deal with government, health and welfare agencies, and it is good to see that same level of on-line service being available within our church administration.

Administration is as necessary in the Church as it is in any other organisation – whether we're talking about select vestries, diocesan councils or the RB. The Church will be well served when each of those bodies is focussed on the same end – the mission and witness of the Church. In that respect we are well served by the RB and its staff and by our Theological Institute. I commend this report to you and happily second its adoption.